Social Questions

Bulletin of the Methodist Federation for Social Service (unofficial), an organization which rejects the method of the struggle for profit as the economic base for society; which seeks to replace it with social-economic planning in order to develop a society without class distinctions and privileges.

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PAN-AMERICANISM

The Pan-Americanism of yesterday was a beautiful dream projected by the idealism of the far-sighted and defeated by the egotism of the myopic. The Pan-Americanism of today is a stark necessity recognized as such by all those to whom our American democratic forms and the spirit underlying them are dear.

History

For more than a century the struggle to find a sound working basis for inter-American unity has been carried on.

The first meeting of the American nations to consider all-American problems was called in 1826 by the Venezuelan Simón Bolivar, in whose honor a sovereign state had been created and named Bolivia. It failed to accomplish its objective, effective Pan-American unity, for various reasons, among which must be prominently listed our own failure at cooperation. "I have ploughed the sea," lamented Bolivar as he contrasted results with anticipations.

"At the first Inter-American Conference ever held, at Panama in 1826," writes Samuel Guy Inman, "and at half a dozen important ones from then until 1889, the United States was so isolated from Latin America that it did not even have a representative at such meetings." (*League of Nations Chronicle,* Jan. 11, 1939.)

The first so-called Pan-American Conference was held at Washington in 1889-1890 and lasted for some five months—an unduly prolonged session with time prodigiously wasted on petty disputes over minor issues. At the Conference of 1923, fourteen Latin-American states threatened to withdraw from the Pan-American Union unless the United States should agree to the reform of that institution. In 1928 the intervention issue was so hotly disputed that it was feared that international complications would result if the minutes of the last plenary session were to be published without being rewritten. Even in Montevideo and Buenos Aires "there were times when a complete break seemed imminent."

Such being the history of former Inter-American and Pan-American gatherings, it is not surprising that grave fears offset too optimistic hopes as to the outcome of the Eighth Pan-American Conference held in Lima in December of 1938—the shortest of all such gatherings, lasting for only two working weeks. The United States delegation, headed by Secretary Hull, went to Lima committed to the policy of effecting there a strong Pan-American unity against commercial and cultural penetration (even against possible military invasion) of the Western Hemisphere by the totalitarian states. In the accomplishment of this end, however, Mr. Hull had to reckon not only with the spirit of distrust created by the failures of former conferences but also with certain other factors fully as tangible and potent.

Background of the Lima Conference

For a clear understanding of action and reaction at Lima at least two facts must be kept in mind.

First, the still-powerful fear of "Yankee" imperialism which the southern republics have never been able wholeheartedly to relinquish, no matter how vigorously we assert our Good Neighbor Policy or how sincerely they strive to accept our assertions at their face value. They all have abundant precedent for scrutinizing both our political and our economic overtures for signs of our infamous dollar diplomacy of an all-too-recent vintage.

We cannot hopefully assume that—either today or tomorrow—our past record shall no longer stand in the way of an effective Pan-American unity. Our seizure of the Canal Zone, our policy in Cuba, Puerto Rico, Nicaragua and elsewhere, our military invasion of Mexico, and our economic control of many Latin-American countries are acts which speak so loudly that it is not strange that our neighbors at the South cannot hear clearly what we now say. Such acts cannot be easily or quickly lived down. Time alone and a democratic policy translated into democratic deeds will convince those who have suffered at our hands that we mean what we say when we assure them that our imperialistic program is a thing of the past.

Second, the rapid growth of Nazi and Fascist influence in Latin America gives ample reason for the most extreme fears on the part of those who are working for a democratic front against the spread of such doctrines in the western world.

In Argentina, Buenos Aires with its Italian population larger than that of Rome itself (nearly half of its 2,600,000 people being of Italian origin) has been too little regarded as a center of Fascist propaganda. More attention has been focused on Brazil where the Vargas coup of November, 1937, warned the world of dictator danger in South America and of latent forces which might at any moment link this danger

to European Fascism. Later developments in Brazil may have tended to allay this specific fear, yet the latent forces still persist both there and in the rest of Latin America where dictators of one variety or another have always found it relatively easy to establish themselves. The fact remains that both Argentina (where the Italian influence is stronger) and Brazil (where German Nazism seems to constitute the chief threat to democracy) are fertile fields for the development of a Fascism which at any moment may ally itself with Italy and Germany. As goes Argentina, undoubtedly will go its neighbors Paraguay and Uruguay.

Perú is far from being a true democracy. John White's reports of Peruvian espionage during the Lima Conference itself may mean more or less than he assumed, but no one can deny that Perú under Benavides is at least potentially Fascist—with Italian and German bank loans under-girding the Benavides regime and the Japanese colony in Perú promising 30,000 armed Japanese "to shoot down Apristas."

The recent victory of the Popular front in Chile would seem to have put that country squarely on the side of the democratic nations, but its strength is yet to be tested. The powerful German influence in Chile, linked with other anti-democratic forces there, constitutes a threat to Popular Front gains and may make of Chile itself an added Fascist danger. In order clearly to understand the somewhat equivocal attitude of the Chilean delegation, it must be remembered that the new government did not take office till the Lima Conference was nearly over and that the delegation itself was appointed by the old regime.

In Central America Guatemala and Salvador are leading centers of Fascist aggression—storehouses of munitions for Nazi Germany in particular. The threat in Guatemala is particularly menacing because of its proximity to Mexico, outstanding exponent of democracy but subject to great Fascist pressure both from within and without. The absence of U. S. A.-controlled Puerto Rico counted against us more heavily than we care to admit. As a matter of enlightened self-interest, we must face the fact that the emergence of Puerto Rico as a sovereign state will do more to enhance our prestige among the other American republics than any amount of empty democratic protestations on our part.

However, at Lima the United States found the six Central American republics as well as Mexico, Cuba, Santo Domingo and Haiti, together with Colombia and Venezuela (what may be termed the twelve "Caribbean Nations") back of its program to oppose either a military or ideological invasion of the Western Hemisphere by anti-democratic forces.

The Latin-American definition of democracy, of course, is as varied and at times as paradoxical as our own. John T. Whittaker, correspondent for the *Chicago Daily News,* reports an interview with Haya de la Torre, leader of the Peruvian APRA movement, which two years ago is generally conceded to have won the election in Perú had not Benavides declared the election illegal. In this interview de la Torre asserted that South America is ready for nothing save "functional democracy. Our wards of independence are comparable only to Magna Charta in which the barons put their demands to King John. Under Bolivar and San Martín the South American landholders broke from the Spanish crown. They did not break up the *fundos* or great estates. This system of *latifundismo* and exploitation by foreign capital enslaves the masses and degrades the elite, in a continent where democracy means not equality of opportunity but independence from the old world."

Against such a definition of democracy as that, must be considered the Six-Year Plan of Mexico and the genuine commitment of the Cárdenas government to a program of definite socialization and exploitation of Mexican resources for the Mexican people; the victory of the Popular Front in Chile; and the seeming new birth of democracy in Cuba. Not all Latin democracy can be defined as mere "independence from the old world." In some quarters Latin American democracy seems intent on advancing farther and more rapidly than does democracy in the United States.

The Lima Conference

Against such a background, then, did the Lima Conference of the 21 American republics take place. From the outset it was clear that two definite blocs were forming: the United States bloc and that led by Argentina.

In the face of Argentine opposition two courses were open to Secretary Hull and the United States delegation. Hull could have marshalled back of him a substantial numerical majority which would have out-voted Argentina and her following. Such a tactic, however, would have hopelessly alienated Argentina and have paved the way for a vastly speeded-up east-coast Fascist penetration. The second course Hull adopted: concessions to a common program to which both Argentina and the United States could and did agree. Much was sacrificed to these concessions but the net gain in terms of Inter-American solidarity and common-front opposition to the Fascist ideal would seem to warrant the sacrifice. In the last analysis, too, the United States could scarcely expect from the other American republics what she herself has rejected in the past. "Argentina's policy—general support of international cooperation with opposition to specific commitments—was almost an exact parallel of what Washington has demanded for itself in the past both in European and American affairs. As late as the 1928 Havana Conference, the United States fought shy of any political ties with the new world nations." (*Foreign Policy Bulletin,* Jan. 6, 1939.)

The Lima Conference unanimously adopted 110 resolutions emanating from different sources. Four of the most important are cited below:

1. A resolution opposing introduction into the Western Hemipshere of the principle of political minorities (proposed by Brazil).

2. A resolution declaring against the collective

exercise by foreigners of political rights granted by countries of origin (proposed by Argentina and evidently directed against the plebiscite of German residents recently held in Latin America).

3. A resolution condemning racial and religious persecution (proposed by Cuba).

4. A resolution recommending reasonable tariffs in lieu of other forms of trade restrictions and the negotiation of trade agreements embodying the principle of non-discrimination (proposed by Secretary Hull).

On two especially vital issues no action was taken: the Spanish civil war and the refugee question. Failure to act here can be explained only on the ground of the diverse interests and sympathies represented at the Conference, and of the steady stream of Fascist propaganda in both Americas.

Over and above the resolutions adopted, "The Declaration of Lima" must be considered as reaffirming the best that past Conferences have accomplished and setting a new high for the possibility of future concerted action between the American continents.

The essence of the "Declaration" follows: After a preamble which asserts that "the peoples of America have achieved unity through the similarity of their republican institutions, their unshakable will for peace . . . and through their absolute adherence to the principles of international law . . . and of individual liberty without religious or racial prejudice," the governments of the American states declare:

"First—That they reaffirm their continental solidarity and their purpose to collaborate in the maintenance of the principles upon which the said solidarity is based.

"Second—That they reaffirm their decision to maintain them and to defend them against all foreign intervention, or activity that may threaten them.

"Third—In case the peace, security or territorial integrity of any American Republic is thus threatened by acts of any nature that may impair them, they proclaim their common concern and their determination to make effective their solidarity, coordinating their respective sovereign wills by means of the procedure of consultation, established by conventions in force and by declarations of the Inter-American Conferences, using the measures which in each case the circumstances may make advisable. (It is understood that the Governments of the American Republics will act independently in their individual capacity, recognizing fully their juridicial equality as sovereign states.)

"Fourth—That in order to facilitate the consultations established in this and other American peace instruments, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the American Republics, when deemed desirable and at the intiative of any one of them, will meet in their several capitals by rotation and without protocolary character. Each Government may, under special circumstances or for special reasons, designate a representative as a substitute for its Minister for Foreign Affairs."

Significance of Lima

Press comment on the significance and achievements of the Conference differs widely.

"The Declaration of Lima . . . affirms an international solidarity on the two American continents that under present conditions is impossible among any other group of nations. Merely to think of Europe is to realize how alien such an agreement is to the spirit and motives that are dominant in that agglomeration of tensions, fears, ambitions, repressions, hatreds and conflicts. . . . This is the Monroe Doctrine raised to an unselfish plane. It is no longer unilateral but is implemented reciprocally by the cooperation of the twenty-one governments. The hostility of the German press to the agreement indicates that the Reich recognizes that its plans to secure control of South America are destined to meet with stern resistance."—(*Presbyterian Tribune,* Jan. 5, 1939.)

In brief, we have here the first effective American attempt at concerted action. Granted that the only concrete result was agreement to consult (reaffirmation of Kellogg Pact) and united reaffirmation of principles already affirmed in other treaties, it must be remembered that this time it was with reference to the menace of Fascism and imperialism (the latter the amendment to Hull's plan) instead of to war in general. In contrast to Chamberlain's policy of concession, it is an affirmation of resistance to Fascism.

From Lima certain conclusions emerge which must determine our future policy.

We cannot be successfully anti-Fascist in Latin America and pro-Fascist in Europe. We cannot stop Fascist powers arming Latin-American minorities if we continue to arm Fascist powers.

We cannot be both good neighbor and imperialist. Abandonment of imperialism is the essential condition for checking both native Fascism in Latin America and Fascist penetration from Europe. The test is Mexico and oil. Reports in business circles indicate that they are attempting to force the State Department to renew pressure on Mexico in the spring. Meanwhile demands for such action will increase here. This means, of course, more trade from Mexico with Germany, Italy and Japan. Thus again we strengthen the powers we are trying to keep out of Latin America.

The only foundation for a Good Neighbor and anti-Fascist policy is the whole-hearted acceptance of the "Calvo Doctrine" so popular in Latin America, that alien investors have no rights other than those which belong to citizens. This is sound in law and in ethic; yet at Lima we secured postponement of its discussion for five years.

As to hemisphere defense, we must recognize this as the cooperative responsibility of all the nations concerned, successful only on the basis of mutual obligation and mutual control. The best defense of this hemisphere is the mutual development of the genuinely democratic forces in each of its nations so that they can successfully resist the cultural and economic penetration of Fascism. A free Spain will do more at this moment to defend democracy in this hemisphere than many battleships.

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

G. H. Stuart: *Latin America and the United States* (1938 revision, Appleton-Century).

J. F. Rippy: *Historical Evolution of Hispanic America* (Crofts).

F. A. Kirkpatrick: *Latin America* (Macmillan, 1939).

C. Beals: *Coming Struggle for Latin America* (Lippincott, 1937).

Josephine Herbst: *Excitement South* (Modern Age Books—to be published this Spring).

G. F. Eliot: *The Ramparts We Watch* (Reynal, 1938).

F. Tannenbaum: *Peace by Revolution* (Columbia University Press, 1933).

H. B. Parkes: *A History of Mexico* (Houghton, 1938).

PAMPHLET RECOMMENDATIONS

The Lima Conference (National Peace Conference, 10c).

Latin America (World Affairs Pamphlet No. 15, 35c).

Lima Conference (Foreign Policy Bulletin, Jan. 6, 1939).

Hitler Over Latin America (Lawyers Committee on American Relations with Spain).

Mexican Expropriation: The Mexican Oil Problem (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 25c).

Mexico's Resources for Livelihood (International Industrial Relations Institute, 31c).

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Rev. Clarence Avey, of Lynn, Mass. (following an address on workers' education given at Lynn by Charles Webber before Local 201 of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America), informed the Union that he would be willing to give them one evening a week for six weeks. Professor Irwin Beiler, of Allegheny College, Meadville, Pa., has made a similar offer to the members of Local 8, T. W. O. C., Meadville employees of the Viscose plant there. In both instances the Union members seem anxious to avail themselves of proffered services.

On the day the House of Representatives was debating the W. P. A. appropriation, a group of our Pittsburgh Conference Federation members, meeting under the leadership of Rev. B. F. Crawford, of Carnegie, Pa., sent telegrams to Chairman Edward T. Taylor of the House of Representatives Appropriations Committee and to Senator Joseph Guffey of Pennsylvania requesting them to ask the House and Senate to appropriate $1,000,000,000 to carry the W. P. A. program through to June 30, 1939. The Pittsburgh Unit of the United Christian Council for Democracy, under Rev. Francis C. Schlater, of Turtle Creek, Pa., sent a similar telegrams to Congressmen.

M. F. S. S. members in the North East Ohio Conference held an all-day meeting in the Oberlin Graduate School of Theology on January 18. The theme, "Working for Social Change in the Midst of the World Crisis," was developed in its various phases by Professor Leonard T. Stidley, Dr. Clarence T. Craig and Charles Webber. The group organized an Action Committee with Robert Clemmons, of Mineral Ridge, as chairman, to supplement the work of the Annual Conference Social Service Committee. Professor Stidley, Oberlin (who is editing a news report for the committee dealing with concrete accomplishments of Federation members in Ohio), desires to be placed on the mailing list of all similar publications of our Federation Units.

A Unit of the United Christian Council for Democracy was organized in Cleveland during Mr. Webber's visit there in January.

While Charles Webber was waiting to speak to the Cleveland Painters Union, Local 867, on January 16, someone threw a tear-gas bomb in the hall and the fumes drove everyone out. The progressive group in the Union had invited him to speak, knowing that a controversy was on with the Old Guard over certain unethical acts of some of the Old Guard Union officials. Nothing daunted by the tear-gas episode, the progressives held an adjourned meeting in the Moose Hall, where Mr. Webber encouraged their endeavors to free their Union from the grip of racketeers.

In the struggle to uphold the validity of the democratic process in the city government of Bristol, Conn., Paul DuBois, pastor of the Prospect M. E. Church of that city, has played a leading rôle. The controversy has centered around the question of the municipal ownership of the gas and electric plant. A committee of 25 citizens was authorized by the mayor to study the situation, and Mr. DuBois was asked to select the committee. The question of a municipal plant Mr. DuBois considers "a debatable one." What is not debatable in a democracy, he holds, is "whether the wishes of the majority shall be carried out."

EXCERPTS FROM THE MAIL BAG

Concerning the new government in Chile, George Howard, of Santiago, writes: "This Popular Front movement includes all left-wing groups—socialists, communists, radicals, etc., words which scare some people in the U. S., but which to us mean 'life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,' and above all, freedom of speech with all priests kept where they belong—out of politics and in their churches."

"I am taking the liberty of writing you a very sincere note of appreciation of the job *Social Questions* is doing. I think it is easily the most consistently progressive and illuminating short discussion of timely issues available. Keep up the good work!" —Managing Editor, *Social Work Today*.

Franklin Albricias, writing from Alicante, Spain, on December 8, acknowledges the receipt of the Federation's $135 gift sent through the Medical Bureau: "This morning I had an enormous joy . . . your gift of cereals, coffee, canned goods, dried fruits and soap arrived safely."

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